

Naloxone and Aaron's Law: Frequently Asked Questions

Indiana has seen a sharp increase in the number of overdose deaths tied to heroin and other opioids in recent years and ranked 16th nationally in 2013 for drug overdose deaths. The state is committed to reducing these numbers by making the overdose antidote naloxone more available to first responders and lay people who are likely to be the first on the scene if someone overdoses.

What is Naloxone?

Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, is a non-narcotic medication that serves as an antidote for opioid overdoses. If administered in a timely manner, naloxone can reverse the life-threatening respiratory failure that is usually the cause of overdose deaths. Naloxone has been proven effective in reversing overdoses caused by heroin and prescription medications such as OxyContin, Percocet, Methadone and Vicodin.

How is Naloxone administered?

Naloxone can be given through intramuscular injection, intravenously or as a nasal spray. Naloxone is also available in an autoinjector, similar to an epi-pen, called Evzio.

How does it work?

Naloxone reverses the effects of opioids on the brain's receptors and allows the person's breathing to return to normal. Patients typically respond within 5 minutes. In some cases, multiple doses of naloxone are needed to reverse the effects of overdose.

Is Naloxone harmful?

No. Naloxone has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system. Those who are using opioids but have not overdosed may experience withdrawal symptoms if given naloxone. Naloxone is not a controlled substance and has no potential for abuse.

What is Aaron's Law?

Governor Mike Pence in April signed Aaron's Law, named for Indianapolis resident Aaron Sims, who died of a heroin overdose in 2013 at age 20. The law allows healthcare providers to provide a standing order for naloxone to registered entities so they can dispense it to Hoosiers without a prescription.

Where can I get Naloxone?

Family physicians can prescribe naloxone to individuals. Indiana also has created the Overdose Prevention Therapy-Indiana, or optIN, registry where entities can register as naloxone dispensers. The registry, which can be accessed at <https://optin.in.gov>, allows nonprofits, pharmacies, local health departments, addiction treatment facilities, correctional facilities and other entities to register as providers of naloxone. Entities must obtain a prescription, or standing order, from a physician allowing them to distribute naloxone, provide training in the use of naloxone, instruct those who administer it to call 911 and provide a list of options for substance abuse treatment. Registered entities will also report the number of doses distributed to the state annually. Those seeking naloxone can visit the site and see a map showing the locations of entities that can dispense naloxone.